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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

16 June 1952

SUBJECT: TERMS OF REFERENCE: NIE-35/2: PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS  
IN INDOCHINA

THE PROBLEM

To estimate French and Chinese Communist capabilities and intentions with respect to Indochina and the internal situation throughout Indochina. NOTE: The estimate on the tactical military situation will run through mid-1953. However, attention will be given on a longer range basis to Vietnamese developments and French capabilities and intentions.

QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

I. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

A. What is the current situation in Indochina with respect to the following:

1. The status of combat operations in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia?

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- a. What trends have there been in the past six months in the relative military strength, combat effectiveness, and tactical disposition of the French-Indochinese and Viet Minh forces?
- b. What are the present French-Indochinese capabilities to:
  - (1) Expand their area of control and inflict heavy losses on the Viet Minh, assuming the present degree of Chinese Communist assistance to the Viet Minh;
  - (2) Hold presently occupied territory in Indochina against the Viet Minh operating with the present degree of Chinese Communist assistance;
  - (3) Resist attacks by the Viet Minh operating with substantially increased Chinese Communist assistance;
  - (4) Resist attacks by combined Viet Minh-Chinese Communist combat forces?

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2. The political situation in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, particularly those developments influencing administrative efficiency, national morale, mobilization capabilities, and relations with the French?
  3. The economic situation in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as it affects national morale and mobilization capabilities?
  4. The situation in Viet Minh held territory, including morale, food supply, armaments production, relations with the Chinese Communists, manpower resources, and extent and effectiveness of controls?
- B. What is the current nature and level of Chinese Communist assistance to the Viet Minh?
- C. What is the current nature and level of French support to the Associated States of Indochina?
1. Military
  2. Economic
  3. Political

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D. What is the current nature and level of US support to the French and Indochinese?

1. Military
2. Economic
3. Political

II. FACTORS AFFECTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

A. French-Indochinese Capabilities and Intentions

1. How will French and Indochinese will and intention to resist be affected by the following:
  - a. Political, economic, and military developments in Western Europe, and within metropolitan France and the French Union?
  - b. Political and economic trends within Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, including attitudes toward French imperial control and toward the Chinese Communists? (To what extent are the Chinese Communists regarded as conquerors and to what extent as liberators from white control?)
  - c. Possible tripartite warnings to the CC to keep their troops out of Indochina?

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- d. Changes in the level of US economic and military assistance?
  - e. An armistice in Korea?
  - f. An expansion of the Korean war?
2. What trends in French-Indochinese capabilities to resist or reduce Viet Minh-Chinese Communist pressure are probable?
- a. In trained manpower, organized forces, and material supply (including US aid)?
    - (1) French forces
    - (2) Vietnamese forces
    - (3) Laotian and Cambodian forces
  - b. In political strength, stability, and national morale in the Associated States?

B. Viet Minh-Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions

- 1. What trends in Viet Minh-Chinese Communist capabilities are probable through mid-1953 assuming a continuation of the present situation in Korea:
  - a. In terms of trained Viet Minh manpower?

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- b. In terms of Viet Minh ability to utilize effectively heavy military equipment and to coordinate in combat all of their organized forces?
  - c. In terms of Chinese Communist abilities to provide an increased volume of technical and material assistance?
  - d. In terms of Chinese Communist ability to commit combat forces in Indochina?
    - (1) Ground forces
    - (2) Air forces
    - (3) Naval forces
    - (4) Logistic capabilities and limitations
2. What effect would an expansion of the war in Korea or an armistice have on Communist capabilities in Indochina?
3. How will Viet Minh courses of actions be affected by the following:
- a. Failure to receive an increased level of technical and material assistance?
  - b. The economic and political situation within their area of control?

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- c. A deterioration in their combat effectiveness?
- d. An increase in their combat effectiveness?
- 4. How will Chinese Communist courses of action in Indochina be influenced by the following:
  - a. Over-all Chinese Communist interests and policy in the Far East?
  - b. A gradual increase in French-Indochinese capabilities?
  - c. A deterioration in the strength and effectiveness of the Viet Minh?
  - d. A tripartite warning to keep their troops out of Indochina?
  - e. Changes in the Korean war?
  - f. Other contingencies such as the release of Nationalist internees in Indochina, combat operations by Chinese Nationalist troops in Southeast Asia, or against the China mainland, etc.?
- 5. What trends are likely in Viet Minh-Chinese Communist relations?

III. PROBABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(To be prepared by O/NE on basis of above)